BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

2008-00292/

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2006FOR0139-001247
Oct. 20, 2006

Ministry of Forests and Range

FOREST AGREEMENT BRINGS BENEFITS TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

CLEARWATER – The Province recently awarded the Wells Gray Community Forest Corporation a Community Forest Agreement that was marked by an official signing celebration today, Kamloops-North Thompson MLA Kevin Krueger announced on behalf of Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman.

"I'm extremely happy to help celebrate the Wells Gray Community Forest Agreement today. Community forests are important to this area, and important to me," said Krueger. "I've been a strong supporter of their application from the beginning, and the opportunity presented here today demonstrates this government's commitment to the community forest initiative."

The Probationary Community Forest Agreement covers more than 13,000 hectares in the Kamloops Timber Supply Area, and with an annual cut of 33,500 cubic metres, it will help mitigate the effect of mountain pine beetle attacked timber in the region. The area for the Wells Gray Community Forest (WGCF) surrounds the town of Clearwater, and is located on both sides of the North Thompson River.

"This is an exciting time for the communities of Clearwater, Birch Island, and Vavenby in Wells Gray Country," said Leverne Burnell, president of the Wells Gray Community Forest Corporation. "We are enthusiastic about the many benefits that will arise from managing our community forest: local employment, community capacity building, and funding for community projects."

Area residents began working towards a community forest licence after the Vavenby sawmill closed. The WGCF corporation will focus its efforts on log sales, producing log products for local and regional speciality wood product plants, small-scale value added businesses, and existing manufacturing facilities. The corporation will work with major licensees in the area to develop log trading and sales programs to promote their forestry products.

Since August 2004, government has provided new or expanded community forest opportunities for 30 communities across the province. These agreements give local governments, community groups and First Nations the opportunity to more fully participate in the stewardship of local forest resources.

-30-

Media contact:

Jennifer McLarty
Public Affairs Officer
Ministry of Forests and Range
250 387-4592

Ted Richardson
Director
Wells Gray Community Forest Corp.
250 674-3530

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.